

Road Running Forum

Ed Warner, UKA Chairman

Ed pointed out that there was a huge number of registered endurance athletes nationally compared to track & field athletes. Despite this, the focus from UKA / EA has always been on the track & field, because of the high profile athletes involved in this side of the sport and the greater number of events at big competitions like the Olympics. Ed is keen to help with the endurance side of the sport, and is involved in the work within UKA to support endurance athletics.

A lot of the big road races in Britain, such as London Marathon and Great North Run are organised by big names such as David Bedford and Brendan Foster. They generate a lot of money, most of which goes to charities, so again the money is not being re-cycled back into the sport of endurance running.

UKA have created Run Britain, with input from some of the big names in the sport. The Run Britain website is paid for by sponsorship, not out of road race levies. The aim is to build a community of runners who may be prospective club members.

The Race Directors' Portal is a service within the Run Britain website for race directors. It provides an online race licence application system. It lists all races that have been granted a licence. It also provides an online race entry system, cheaper than the Runners World one !

Since UKA took over as the provider of race licenses, clubs have benefited from the reduced race levies. 40% of the licence fees are going back into the system to pay for things such as Networks. Out of the remainder, affiliated members are able to bid for funding for projects of benefit to endurance running.

Geoff Wightman is now in charge of Run Britain. Through it he hopes to find people committed to endurance running and get them into clubs and the system. The aim being to get all joggers connected and find great marathon runners of the future.

Martin Rush, EA National Coach Mentor

Martin reported that there had been many new developments since taking on his role as National Coach Mentor for Endurance running and walking. He has been specifically tasked to work with 40-50 mentors and 11 area coach mentors, with a cascade of knowledge going through to the athletes via their coaches. Master-classes have been organised and workshops with top athletes and coach mentors. This has helped mentors to pass on knowledge to local coaches and clubs.

Peter Masters, Sussex Representative

Peter Masters spoke about developments in road running in Sussex :-

- The Network's equipment pooling scheme will result in the purchase of a race clock with five clubs so far joining the scheme and contributing £300 each towards it. The clock will be available for hire to other clubs not in the scheme.
- The Run in England 'Leadership in Running Fitness' courses have been popular in Sussex, with two fully subscribed courses taking place over the past year. Lese AC have implemented the Run in England scheme in their own way. Out of about 50 people who joined the new beginners classes, most have gone on to join the club.
- Several clubs have benefited from flying coach visits by endurance coaches.
- The Coach and Athlete Development Days, organised by the Network, included a specific Endurance Development Day last year, which was well attended.

Peter Burfoot, Sussex Road Running

Peter outlined the workings of the Sussex Grand Prix and the Sussex 10k Challenge, both aimed at road racing.

The **Sussex Grand Prix** is a road running competition for clubs in East and West Sussex. It uses results from 19 organised races in Sussex over various distances from 5 miles to 15 miles. There are currently 20 clubs involved, and 915 runners who competed in at least one event in 2009. To be eligible for prizes, runners need to compete in eight events, two of over 10 miles, and points are awarded according to placings. This can enable lesser athletes to beat better ones by scoring more points over a greater number of events. The system is funded by subscriptions from members clubs, and this goes towards the prizes.

The **10k Challenge** was created by the road running panel of Sussex County AA in order to tempt local talent out to race and improve the standard of road running in Sussex. Two years of funding by the County have been agreed so far. Standard qualifying times are set for men and women at specific 10k races in the county. Individual monetary prizes and team prizes of county medals are awarded at the end of the season.

Peter mentioned that there is a separate Road Running section on the Sussex Athletics website : www.roadrunning.sussexathletics.org.uk

Q & A

Peter Masters asked Ed Warner to elaborate on the road race levies 'pot', and the criteria required to make a successful bid. Sussex AA applied for funding for their 10k Challenge but were unsuccessful, and the message from EA implied that this 'pot' was no longer available.

Ed Warner replied that there were still funds available which could be applied for, but there was disappointment at the quality of the bids to date, which is why some applications had been turned down. He suggested that Geoff Wightman of Run Britain could be approached with ideas or initiatives for future funding.

Chris Carter said that problems had been experienced with the Run Britain website's Race Directors' Portal. He was also disappointed that the very successful 'Park Runs'

were not mentioned on Run Britain, and has experienced problems in getting help with funding for them.

Ed Warner said that he approves of the Park Runs and would like to have supported them, but they do not supply UKA with the required data and details of entrants. He acknowledged that Park Runs do pay UKA for insurance for a nominal fee, and while UKA supports the series they do not form part of the framework because of the lack of data sharing.

Stuart Condie asked what 321 was.

Martin Rush said it was a Run in England beginners' tool which aimed to give people a progressive target (should be 123 in fact), whereby they can run 1k, 2k, then 3k or 1 mile, 2 miles, 3 miles. It is used by Run in England groups.

Neville Taylor felt that the top end of the sport of endurance running was not getting enough support from UKA.

Ed Warner disagreed and said that it was very much a focus of UKA.

Maureen Stephens said Worthing had experienced increased difficulties in putting on road races due to the ever increasing number of marshals required and insufficient volunteers. They are reduced to a 10k and a 20 mile road race, whereas they used to have a half marathon and marathon as well.

There was no time for a reply.